



DOL News Brief

August 19, 2010

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Solis Marks Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote



Wednesday marked a major milestone in women's equality: the 90th anniversary of the 19th Amendment's ratification, which gave women the right to

vote in 1920. "Although we have made great progress over the past nine decades, we still have a long way to go when it comes to equality for women in the workplace," said Secretary Solis. "The Department of Labor is focused on promoting equal pay, work-life balance, paid leave and employment opportunities for all women. Work is about dignity and respect, just like the universal right to vote. Our common prosperity will be advanced by allowing all people, men and women, to reach their full potential. And that's what the Labor Department is working toward every single day."

- [Read the Secretary's Statement](#)

What's Hot

VETS Awarded \$900,000 For National Technical Assistance Center

The Veterans' Employment and Training Service on Wednesday announced nearly \$900,000 in grants to fund its National Technical Assistance Center. The grants were awarded under the Labor Department's Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP), and will help stimulate and improve the delivery system of services provided under existing HVRP grants. "As our grantees forge ahead in the effort to help the nation's homeless veterans, it is important the work be done in the most efficient and effective manner," said Secretary Solis.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Company To Pay Nearly \$1 Million in Back Wages to H-1B Employees

Smartsoft International Inc., a computer consulting company, has agreed to pay nearly \$1 million in back wages and interest to 135 nonimmigrant workers temporarily employed by the company under the H-1B visa program. The agreement with the Labor Department's Office of the Solicitor settles a dispute with the department's Wage and Hour Division, which alleged that some employees were not fully compensated according to the department's H-1B regulations. In announcing the settlement, Secretary Solis underscored the Labor Department's commitment to enforce our nation's employment laws and stated that "workers deserve to receive the full wages for which they have worked so hard. That is not just a matter of decency and common sense, it's the law!"

- [Read the News Release](#)

At The Table: Women @ Work

The Institute for Women's Policy Research and the Center for Economic Policy Research this week co-hosted a discussion on "Women



in the Economy." Three employees from the department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) presented, and Latifa Lyles, deputy director of the Women's Bureau, along with Paige Shevlin of the Chief Economist's Office, also participated. BLS' Rachel Krantz-Kent, spoke about the American Time Use Survey supplement that the Women's Bureau is sponsoring, which will ask workers about their access to and use of leave and schedule adjustments to balance work and family responsibilities. The supplement will also ask about times which leave was needed but wasn't taken and for what reasons. Audience members were especially pleased that respondents to the

DOL Working For You

Railroad Safety Worker Tracks Job Success from Job Corps

Twenty-one-year-old Patrick Doepfer is on track for success in the transportation industry, thanks to the training and education he received at Washington, D.C.'s Potomac Job Corps Center. Patrick attended transportation training at Potomac through the Transportation Communications International Union/International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, which also arranged his job shadowing at the U.S. Department of Transportation. From there, Patrick's interest in railroads grew. The Johnstown, Pa., native graduated from Job Corps last year and was hired by the Federal Railroad Administration as a railroad safety inspector trainee in Georgia. He should become a full time inspector by 2013. Job Corps "put me in touch with the right people at the right time," Patrick said about the program. "They are right on their game."



supplement will be able to include elder care as a reason for taking leave. Other topics discussed included the pay gap and paid sick leave.

Congratulations GraduTOTs



"Congratulations! Today is your day. You're off to great places! You're off and away!" These were the words that Office of

the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management Deputy Assistant Secretary Charlotte Hayes shared with 11 graduates of the Labor Department's Esther Peterson Child Development Center last Friday.

The motivational message from Dr. Seuss' *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* was perfect for the soon-to-be kindergarteners with aspirations as far stretched as a future ballerina to a pirate – "because they get treasure." Before the ceremony commenced, the students performed a few songs and reflected on daycare memories through a special slideshow presentation.



- [Learn More About the Center](#)

Solis: Enforcing Safety Laws Key to Reducing Deaths

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' preliminary results from its Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries show a decline in fatalities for 2009 compared with 2008. Last year, 4,340 workers died from work-related injuries, down from a final count of 5,214 fatal work injuries in 2008. "A single worker hurt or killed on the job is one too many," said Secretary Solis. "While a decrease in the number of fatal work injuries is encouraging, we cannot — and will not — relent from our continued strong enforcement of workplace safety laws."

- [Read the Secretary's Statement](#)
- [Read the BLS News Release](#)

Proposed Rule for Recreational Vessel Workers

The Office of Workers' Compensation Programs announced a notice of proposed rulemaking implementing changes in the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act as mandated by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Mandated changes include an exemption for people who work on recreational vessels, regardless of the vessel size. Written comments

News You Can Use

Grab a Camera, Win a Grand



Keep your cameras rolling. The department has extended the deadline for its Career Videos for America's Job Seekers Challenge to allow submissions as late as Monday, Nov. 1. The challenge invites members of the public to produce and submit one- to three-minute videos focusing on the daily activities of 15 high-wage and in-demand occupations. The creator(s) of the top video in each of the 15 categories will win a \$1,000 cash prize.

- [Join the Challenge](#)

Around DOL

Job Corps Celebrates 46 Years as a Prominent Alumnus Reminisces

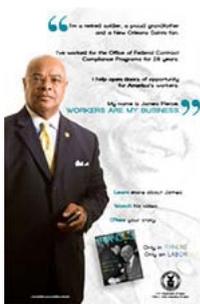
Since Job Corps began on Aug. 20, 1964, almost three million students ages 16 to 24 have received free training to become skilled white-collar office workers and blue-collar tradespeople. Others have continued their education to become doctors, nurses, lawyers and business leaders.

Job Corps' motto is "Success Lasts a Lifetime" and nowhere is this more evident than in the story of Idaho Court of Appeals Judge Sergio Gutierrez, who received his GED and even learned a little carpentry at the Wolf Creek, Oregon, Job Corps Center in the early 1970s.



[\[more\]](#)

Workers are His Business . . . but the Saints are His Passion



Jim Pierce, a 28-year employee of the U.S. Department of Labor, recently visited the White House, where President Barack Obama and members of the New Orleans Saints' football team gathered to attend the traditional meeting between the president and the latest Super Bowl winner. Pierce's dream trip had its launch when the department's Deputy Chief of Staff Jeff Navin had a request from the White House to send one representative from the department to attend the event. "As we looked around to see who could represent the department, we remembered one of the elevator posters

that Office of Public Affairs had produced," Navin said, recalling the poster that featured Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs' (OFCCP) employee, Jim Pierce. "In the poster that featured Mr. Pierce, one of the things that he noted was that he was a lifelong New Orleans Saints' fan.

[\[more\]](#)

- [Download the poster.](#)

DOL in Action

Investigation Nets \$232,773 for Oil Well Maintenance Workers in Okla.

Eastok Inc. in McAlester, Okla., has agreed to pay \$232,773 in overtime back wages to 110 well maintenance workers after an investigation by the department's Wage and Hour Division in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, Okla., found violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Employees were paid straight time for all hours worked, including those exceeding 40 in a

on the proposed regulation can be submitted until Oct. 18.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Job Corps Top 10 List



Job Corps centers around the country are continuously evaluated based on the performance of their students. In Program Year 2009, centers

were assessed in 11 performance benchmarks, including placement rates, wages, literacy gains and GED / high school diploma attainment rates. For this most recent Program Year, Blue Ridge Job Corps Center in Virginia, took top honors in a nationwide ranking, with Laredo, Texas, and Joliet, Ill., Job Corps centers ranking second and third, respectively. Rounding out the top 10 centers are Dayton, Ohio, Gadsden, Ala., Trapper Creek, Mont., Collbran, Colo., Mississippi, Hawaii and Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Currently, 123 Job Corps Centers are ranked each month based on performance. This ranking is one of many tools Job Corps uses to ensure quality and compliance systemwide.

- [Read More on Job Corps](#)

Upcoming Deadlines & Events

Open Funding Opportunities

Check out the grant opportunities with DOL.

EBSA — Compliance Workshop: The Basics and More

- [August 24, 2010 — St. Louis, MO](#)

EBSA — Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program Workshop

- [August 31, 2010 — Sacramento, CA](#)
- [August 31, 2010 — Sacramento, CA](#)

MSHA — Surface Haulage Safety Workshop

- [August 24, 2010 — Beckley, WV](#)

OFCCP — Affirmative Action Program

- [August 24, 2010 — Jacksonville, FL](#)

OFCCP — AAP Development & Preparing for a Desk Audit

- [August 26, 2010 — Baltimore, MD](#)

OFCCP — ADA and Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended

week. The FLSA requires that covered employees be paid at least the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 for all hours worked, plus time and one-half their regular rates of pay, including commissions, bonuses and incentive pay, for hours worked beyond 40 per week.

- [Read the News Release](#)

OSHA Warns Against Withholding HAZWOPER Certificates

OSHA has received numerous complaints from workers taking part in the Gulf Coast oil spill cleanup whose employers are refusing to provide them with a certificate following their completion of training under the Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) standard. OSHA interprets the standard as prohibiting covered employers from withholding written certificates from workers who have successfully completed such training. OSHA is processing complaints related to the withholding of training certificates, and has already referred some matters to the Office of the Inspector General within the Department of Labor for examination as possible consumer fraud.

- [Read the OSHA Assistant Secretary's Statement](#)

Southwestern Virginia Coal Mine Fined More Than \$540,000

Big Laurel Mining Corp., located in Wise County, Va., was cited for five contributory violations in the August 2009 death of one of its workers, who was fatally struck by rock while preparing to set timbers in an entryway of the mine. As a result of that death, the Mine Safety and Health Administration levied \$545,400 in penalties against the mine operator. Several factors contributed to the accident, including failure of the mine operator to follow the mine's approved roof control plan, failure to conduct pre-shift and on-shift examinations, and failure to support the rib. According to the accident investigation report, the fatality could have been avoided, had the mine operator properly documented hazardous conditions that were detected in earlier shifts and corrected those conditions.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Mine Safety Standards Not Voluntary, Says MSHA Chief

When family members of the miners who perished in the Upper Big Branch Mine explosion raised concerns about workplace safety conditions, Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) officials took heed. Testimony delivered during a House Education and Labor Committee hearing in Beckley, W.Va., last April suggested that mine officials may not have been following ventilation regulations prior to the deadly blast. Consequently, MSHA released four new program information bulletins to emphasize the importance of complying with mandatory ventilation safety standards. "This announcement serves to remind all mine operators of their obligation to comply with all federal regulations to ensure the health and safety of their employees," said MSHA Assistant Secretary Joseph A. Main. These standards are not voluntary, and every mine operator in the country is on notice that MSHA will not tolerate violations of ventilation standards."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Another USPS Processing Center Fined for Safety Violations

The Occupational Safety and Health's (OSHA) Cincinnati office has cited the U.S. Postal Service in Dayton, Ohio, with three willful and six serious violations, and proposed \$225,000 in fines. OSHA found that the Postal Service failed to provide adequate electrical safety training, ensure that workers followed safety-related work practices while working on electrical equipment, provide workers with appropriate personal protective equipment while working on energized electrical equipment, address machine lockout procedures and hazards, and provide proper lockout/tagout training. "These sizable fines reflect the severity and ongoing nature of these hazards," said

Seminar

- [August 27, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance: Basic Supply and Service Technical Assistance with ARRA Updates

- [August 26, 2010 — Seattle, WA](#)

OFCCP — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [August 25, 2010 — Nashville, TN](#)
- [August 26, 2010 — New York, NY](#)

OFCCP — How to Compile an AAP and Support Data for a Compliance Review

- [August 20, 2010 — Richmond, VA](#)

OFCCP — Informational & Outreach Forum

- [August 20, 2010 — San Antonio, TX](#)

OFCCP — You Were Scheduled by

OFCCP: How do Construction Contractors Respond and Prepare for the Audit

- [August 25, 2010 — Philadelphia, PA](#)

OLMS — Compliance Assistance Seminar

- [August 26, 2010 — Charleston, WV](#)
- [August 26, 2010 — Mobile, AL](#)
- [August 31, 2010 — Lansing, MI](#)

OSHA — Seminar on Florida's Workers' Compensation Laws and Workplace Safety

- [August 20, 2010 — Tallahassee, FL](#)

WHD — Wage and Hour Division Labor Week

- [August 30, 2010 — Atlanta, GA](#)

Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels. "The Postal Service ignored long-established safety standards and knowingly put its workers in harm's way."

- [Read the News Release](#)

Cooperative Plus Inc. Fined Again For Grain Bin Safety Violations

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has found 25 safety violations at two grain facilities of Cooperative Plus Inc. in Whitewater and Genoa City, Wis., and fined them another \$374,500 in penalties for willful and serious safety violations. These penalties follow \$721,000 in penalties issued earlier this month after a worker was seriously injured from being engulfed by soybeans at the cooperative's Burlington, Wis., facility in February. "This continued non-compliance with long established safety standards for working in grain handling operations by Cooperative Plus Inc. shows a complete disregard for worker safety," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Dr. David Michaels. OSHA recently sent letters to thousands of other grain storage companies warning them of their responsibility to comply with grain-handling and confined space entry standards.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Recovery Highlights

US Virgin Islands Receives Recovery Dollars for UI

More workers who lose jobs through no fault of their own now qualify for unemployment insurance benefits in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The islands this week received \$667,637 in unemployment insurance modernization incentive funds. The territory qualified for a portion of its share of the funds available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by updating its unemployment law to allow workers to use recent earnings to qualify for benefits.

- [Read the News Release](#)

Opportunities are Open: Office of the Secretary

"Good jobs for everyone." Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis has made this statement her mission since her first day on the job. By strengthening the Department of Labor's enforcement efforts and expanding available programs, Secretary Solis is working to ensure that her vision becomes a reality for all workers. Explore the positions below or [view all](#) the rewarding careers at the department.

1. Position in Washington, D.C. Metro Area
[Policy Analyst](#)
DE-10-HRC-OMBUDS-159
Close: 08/25/2010
2. Position in Cincinnati Metro Area, OH Area
[Legal Assistant \(OA\)](#)
DE-10-CHI-ALJ-0159
Close: 08/23/2010

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